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### **Environment Department, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to Discuss Study of Gila River March 24 and 25**

(Santa Fe, NM) — The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation recently completed an important study of the Upper Gila River in Western New Mexico. This study's findings will be discussed at two public meetings next week. The first presentation is scheduled for **March 24, 2004, from 7 to 9 pm at the new Grant County Administration Center in Silver City**, and the second presentation is scheduled for **March 25, 2004, from 7 to 9 pm at the Senior Citizens Center in Gila, New Mexico**.

The Upper Gila River Fluvial Geomorphology Study attempts to determine what factors may be causing damage to bridges, levees, and diversion structures in the Upper Gila Watershed from the New Mexico State Line to Mogollon Creek. The purpose of the study is to increase the awareness of these processes in order to enable improved local, state, and federal management of the stream corridor. The study to be presented next week recommends four management goals:

1. Do not overly constrain the river width for flood control purposes
2. Modify flood control practices to insure that the river is re-attached to its floodplain
3. Do not interfere with the direction of flows in the flood channel and,
4. Continue to inform the public on the fluvial processes that drive the river form.

The Bureau of Reclamation's principal investigator, Rodney J. Wittler, Ph.D., will discuss the findings of the study at the March 24 and 25 meetings. The study includes background information gathering, field data collection, photographic analyses, and a variety of topographic, geomorphic, hydraulic, and hydrologic analyses.

For further information, contact Mr. Mike Matush, Silver City Field Office, NMED Surface Water Quality Bureau at 505-388-0599 or Jon Goldstein, Communications Director, NMED at (505) 827-0314.

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